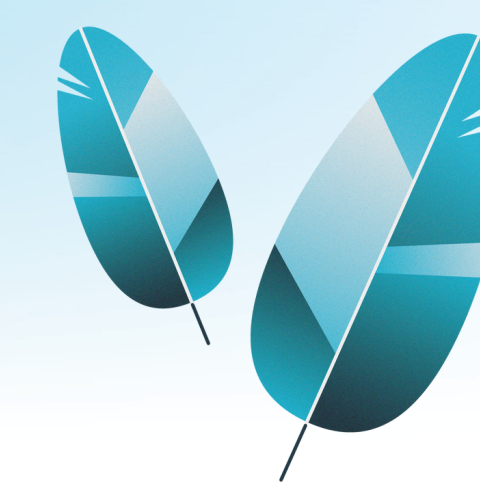


Peers leading peers: An environmental scan of peer support-led initiatives across the Foundry network

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Introduction

What is peer support and what are peer initiatives?

- Peer support is a practice founded on values of hope, self-determination and a mutual agreement of what is helpful [1].
- Formalization and integration of peer support services into Foundry centres as one of five core service streams has yielded unique results where peers have been able to create services beyond the traditional one-to-one medical model.

Objectives

- To describe how peer supporters in the Foundry network have demonstrated a commitment to peer values and leadership through several peer-led initiatives.

Methods

- Using an environmental scan, we engaged peer supporters through our community of practice to identify peer-led initiatives across the network of 11 Foundry communities and our provincial virtual care service.

Results

- Examples of initiatives include:
 - **Beauty of Life in Psychosis (BLIP) group** from Foundry Virtual BC
 - **Parents like us: The unofficial survival guide to parenting a young person with a substance use disorder** handbook published by Family Peer Supporters at Foundry Victoria
 - Cross-collaborative programs across centres in different geographic regions such as **"A Night of Drag"** produced in collaboration with Foundry Virtual BC and Foundry Penticton
- These initiatives have been met with high engagement from young people and caregivers, measured by high and repeat attendance and invitations to present the innovations across the network and at national conferences.

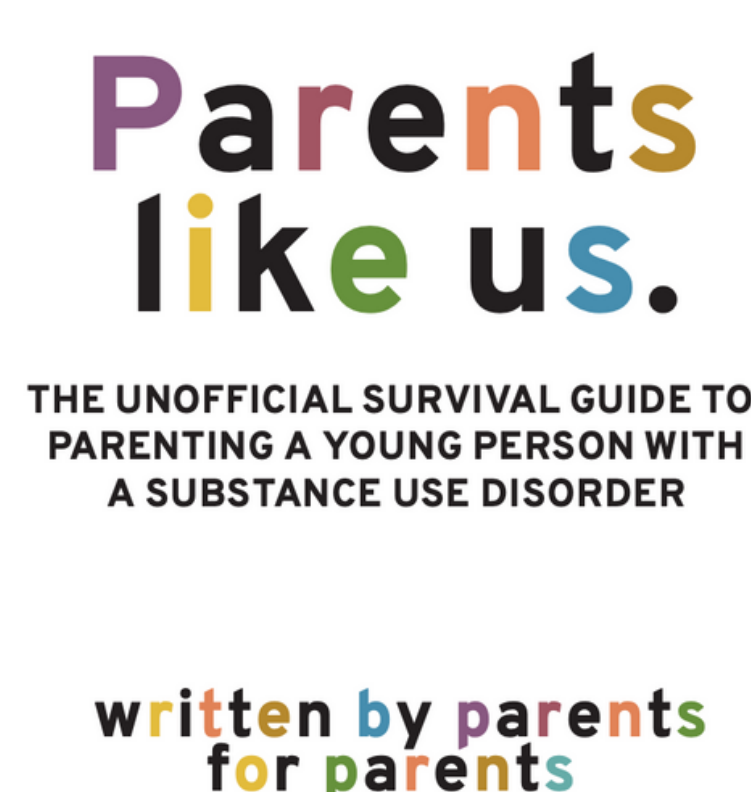
Conclusion

- What makes these initiatives unique is that they were initiated and carried out organically by peers in response to their local community needs and are grounded in values of sharing lived and living experience to demonstrate values of hope and recovery.
- The communities of practice at Foundry allow for rapid sharing of learning among peers, ongoing quality improvement efforts and opportunities to maximize participation of diverse young people and families across the province.

Peer-led Initiatives

Parents like us: The unofficial survival guide to parenting a young person with a substance use disorder

- A group of twelve parents/caregivers from Victoria created a handbook for those supporting young people who have been impacted by substance use. This guide provides a starting point for parents/caregivers who are searching for connection, understanding, support and resources [3].



Beauty of Life in Psychosis: A peer art-based youth group

- Beauty of Life in Psychosis was a six-session art and creativity group led by facilitators with lived experience for youth who self-identify as experiencing psychosis and/or voices, visions or unique beliefs [2].

We wanted to normalize speaking openly about our experiences in all their complexity, as a "regular" part of life and the spectrum of human experience - something that can be funny, scary, weird, interesting, or sometimes beautiful." - Rory, BLIP Group Facilitator

A Night of Drag: A collaboration between Foundry Virtual BC and Foundry Penticton

- The Queer Café program within Foundry Virtual BC partnered with Foundry Penticton to host the "Night of Drag" event on January 26th, 2022. The event was led by a two-spirit drag artist and approximately 30 youth from across BC joined to watch performances. This event explored creative gender expression to promote self-acceptance and community connection [2].



- This handbook was developed as part of the Improving Treatment Together (ITT) Project, which aims to improve the experiences and outcomes of community-based services for young people who use opioids, as well as their families/caregivers and service providers, using co-design methods [3].
- "Production of this handbook has been made possible through a financial contribution from Health Canada as part of the ITT Project, a partnership between the Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction, Foundry Victoria, and Foundry Central Office" [3].

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Partners

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